



EARL GRAHAM POST 159

BRYAN, TEXAS

THE LEGIONNAIRE

For God and Country - Since 1920

Commander's Comments

Welcome to September!

As kids head back to school and autumn temperatures arrive, many of us find our schedules opening up. If you have a few extra hours to spare, there is no better way to spend them than by making a difference right here at our post. Every program we offer relies on dedicated volunteers—and even a small investment of your time creates a massive impact.

Upcoming Events & Fellowship

- Veteran Breakfast (Sept. 12): Uncle Albert will be serving up his famous Biscuits and Gravy along with Eggs, Bacon and Spam.
- Grill & Chill (Sept. 18): Join us for a relaxed, free evening at the post. Bring your favorite food to grill and share. This event is entirely free to the post—we just ask that everyone helps clean up afterward.
- Aggies vs. LSU Tailgate & Outreach (Sept. 26): We are teaming up with the First Baptist Church of Bryan for a special community veteran outreach event featuring a potluck tailgate, ice cream, and baseball cornhole.

(Continued on next page)

Membership JOIN OR RENEW

Contact the Adjutant
adjutant@alegion159.org



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(Continued from front page)

Where We Need Your Talents

- Oratorical Contest Chair: Our post wants to revive our participation in the American Legion Oratorical Competition. If you or someone you know has a passion for public speaking and mentoring youth, please step forward.
- Fundraising Committee: We need energetic volunteers to help raise the funds that keep our core missions alive.

Small Efforts, Massive Impact

Your time and contributions directly support:

- Troop boxes shipped to deployed service members.
- Christmas gift bags delivered to local veterans in assisted living.
- Youth sponsorships, including Scouting, Boys State, and Girls State.

If you are ready to put your time, talent, and effort to work, please speak with a post officer today. Let's make this year our most impactful one yet!

For God and Country,

James "Jimbo" Pfeffer
Commander
Earl Graham Post 159



Administrative Notes

Your Membership Dues Explained

I mentioned this at one of our coffee's last month and noticed some intrigued faces so I thought it would be good to explain further.

Many members may not realize that their full dues payment does not stay at Earl Graham Post 159. A portion is forwarded to The American Legion Department of Texas and National Headquarters to support the organization at the state and national levels.

So, where does your \$50 membership go?

For a \$50 annual membership at Post 159, the breakdown is:

Post 159: \$10

Department of Texas: \$16.50

National: \$23.50

Total: \$50.00

The \$16.50 Department per-capita and \$23.50 National per-capita currently total \$40.00 per member. The remaining \$10.00 stays with our Post to help operate Post 159 and support the programs and activities we provide locally.

In other words, your membership dues help support The American Legion at three levels — National, Department and here at Earl Graham Post 159.

And, of course, the more members we retain and recruit, the stronger our Post becomes and the more we can accomplish together.

Wishing you a great September.

Wes Wynn - Post Adjutant

Brazos Valley Veteran One Stop Day

Monday, Sept 14, 2026

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Earl Graham Post 159

101 Waco St, Bryan, TX

Join us at Post 159 for a one-stop connection to local veteran support, resources, and fellowship. Local specialists will be on-site offering direct assistance with:

- **Benefits Counseling:** Guidance on navigating claims and earned benefits.
- **Health & Wellness:** Connections to regional healthcare and wellness programs.
- **Employment Services:** Job search support, career counseling, and transition assistance.
- **Networking:** Opportunities to connect and share stories with fellow local veterans.

All Brazos Valley veterans are welcome—stop by to access resources or simply enjoy the camaraderie. We look forward to seeing you there!!

Grill and Chill on the Patio

Fire up your appetite! 🍔🔥

Join us on the back patio for a Grill & Chill! We're setting up the post grills for an evening of good food, relaxation, and great camaraderie.

- **When:** Sept 18 5:30PM - 7:30PM
- **Where:** The Back Patio
- **Bring:** Whatever you want to throw on the grill (steaks, burgers, chicken, veggies) plus your favorite sides to enjoy.
- **Why:** To unwind, connect, and enjoy an evening together.

Bring a dish, bring a friend, and come hang out on the patio with us! See you there! 🍷🍻

Post Clean Up Day

Join us for a Post Clean-Up Day on Thursday, September 24! Right after our weekly coffee and donuts, we will roll up our sleeves to tackle a few miscellaneous chores, tidy up the grounds, and get the post looking its absolute best.

Whether you can stay for 30 minutes or a couple of hours, every extra pair of hands helps. Come for the coffee, stay for the camaraderie, and let's take pride in keeping our post in top shape!



New Officers Installed

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Sept 3 - Membership Meeting

5:30PM - Legion Social

6:30PM - Membership Dinner

Menu ~ Meatloaf, Brown Gravy and Mashed Potatoes

7:30PM Membership Meeting

Sept 10 - Manage Your Crazy Self

11am to 2pm - Randy Guttenberger presents practical tools for understanding stress, communication and decision-making

Sept 12 - Veteran Breakfast

Generously Sponsored by

Callaway-Jones

Funeral & Cremation Services

8:00AM to 10:00AM

Sept 14 Veteran One Stop

(Resource Fair hosted by Post 159)

9:00AM to 1:00PM

Sept 18 Grill and Chill

(on the Back Patio)

5:30PM to 7:30PM

Sept 24 Post Clean Up Day

10:00AM

A NEW LEADERSHIP YEAR BEGINS



At the Department convention, Candy Zavala was elected as our new ALA Department President. Her theme for the 2026–2027 term is **Team ALA - Cheering for Our Veterans, Keeping the Spirit Alive.**

Think back to high school game days when pep rallies built excitement for Friday night football. Pom-poms waved, cheer squads led the crowd, and every team member was introduced to roaring fans. The gym filled with so much pride and spirit that you knew this was the championship year.

Much has changed since those days. Our young men and women headed off to the military, served, started families, and grew older. Today, they belong to the first and best team: Team USA. Coming from diverse backgrounds, they are unified by a shared belief in justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty. As American Legion members, they continue serving by advocating for veterans and active-duty military. As the Auxiliary, we are their cheerleaders—supporting their mission and running programs that strengthen our community. It is up to the Legion family to keep that spirit alive.

Leadership & Upcoming Unit Programs

- New Leadership Installation: New officers were installed at our August meeting by installing officer Ronda Ogden. Thank you to our outgoing leaders for their service and welcome to our incoming officers!
- Patriot PAWS: Members recently attended "Patriot PAWS Match Day," where four veterans were matched with service dogs. Unit 159 voted to sponsor our fourth service dog and will vote at the upcoming meeting on the top male and female name choices.
- RISE Program Support: Unit members delivered yoga mats to the Recovering In a Secure Environment (RISE) inpatient program for female veterans. The unit also sponsored "Queen for a Day," an outpatient event providing pampering, makeovers, meals, and care packages.
- Quilts of Valor: Presented 10 quilts to local veterans. To nominate a veteran, see a member of the Quilts of Valor group during their meetings on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month.
- 2027 Membership Drive: Renewal forms are in the mail. Dues are \$41, and Membership Chair Marjean is ready to process renewals and new applications.
- Boys State & Girls State Dinner: The September monthly dinner meeting will honor our Boys State and Girls State citizens and their families. Please bring extra side dishes or desserts to share.
- Give 10 for Education: Collecting new school supplies through October 31st for delivery to local schools during National Education Week in November.
- Poppy Distribution: Volunteers are needed for two-hour shifts to distribute poppies. Dates, times, and locations will be announced at the next meeting.
- Christmas Projects: Early planning is underway for senior living facility Christmas bags with Karen Marko, as well as the VA Hospital Christmas Gift Shops.

Join the ALA Team and help cheer on our veterans—**Goooooo Team USA!**

— Licia Kim, Treasurer Unit 159

GROUND GAINED: VA CLAIMS MOVING FASTER IN 2026

THE BACKLOG IS FALLING BACK — AND MORE VETERANS ARE GETTING SEEN



Attention on deck. For years, too many veterans got used to the wait — filing a claim and settling in for a long fight with the paperwork. That fight is starting to turn in your favor.

Sitrep: Where We Stand

- The VA claims backlog has dropped 74% since January 2025.
- In June, the backlog fell below 70,000 claims for the first time since 2020.
- Over 200,000 additional veterans have enrolled in VA healthcare so far this year.
- 38 new VA health care clinics have opened since January 2025, with nearly \$5 billion going toward facility upgrades this year.
- More than 60,000 mental health appointments have been completed as part of this year's outreach push.

What This Means for You

If you filed a claim and got tired of waiting, or if you never filed because you assumed it wasn't worth the hassle, now is the time to take another look. Faster processing means less time in limbo and more veterans actually getting the care and compensation they earned. If you're not enrolled in VA health care, this is also a good window to get that squared away — appointments and enrollment are both moving quicker than they have in years.

Orders: Take Action

Don't sit on this one. If you have a pending claim, check its status. If you've been putting off filing, file. And if you know a fellow veteran who gave up on the process, pass this along — it may be worth trying again. My office is here to help you navigate the paperwork, so you don't have to go it alone.

For the full deep dive, see: <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-welcomes-200000-new-healthcare-enrollees-so-far-in-2026/>

Jose L. Nava Sr.

Service Officer, American Legion Post 159
936-304-1835 | service@alegion159.org

A New Season of Leadership & Service

A new season is upon us at the Post, marked by fresh leadership and a renewed sense of purpose. We recently elected Jimbo Pfeffer as our new Commander, and he brings incredible energy to our organization. As Commander Pfeffer steps into his role, it serves as a timely reminder that our mission as veterans doesn't end when we take off the uniform—it simply evolves. Our wisdom, discipline, and hard-earned life lessons are deeply needed right here in our community.

Investing in the Next Generation

One of the most powerful ways we can stay engaged is by supporting local youth as they return to school this September. Our Post hosts incredible programs that directly shape young lives:

- Boys State & Auxiliary Girls State: High school juniors learn civic leadership and the fundamentals of government. Volunteers are needed to help recruit, interview, and mentor candidates.
- Junior Shooting Sports: Our marksmanship club teaches youth gun safety, focus, and self-discipline, offering a safe environment where they can build confidence and responsibility.

Through these programs, we offer local youth a living example of respect—teaching them to honor our country, respect the flag, appreciate hard-won freedoms, and treat one another with dignity. Respect is the ultimate foundation of a strong community. Get Involved

Let's match Commander Pfeffer's energy with our own commitment to action. Join us at our next Post meeting to see how you can help with Boys State, Girls State, or our marksmanship club. Our wisdom is our legacy, and our community's youth are ready for us to share it.

— Written by Chuck Wilson



First Vice Commander Introduction



Greetings everyone,

My name is Shawn Jarnagin, and I am excited to serve as your new 1st Vice Commander. I served 30 years in the U.S. Air Force with tours in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, and a few other "scenic" locations around the world. I am looking forward to helping our Post grow, but I could really use your help to make it happen.

I'm sure most of you already greet fellow veterans when you see them out and about—you know, the ones with DV or military branch license plates, or those wearing veteran gear. The question is: do you ask them if they are members of the American Legion?

I'm not asking you to give them a hard sales pitch. All I ask is that you invite them and their family to join us for coffee and donuts on Thursday morning, or to stop by for our social hour and dinner. If we all work together, we can continue to grow our Post.

Thank you,
Shawn Jarnagin
1st Vice Commander

A Timely Find: Reconnecting with a 1927 American Legion Fob

Following my mother's passing in December 2024, I inherited my granddad's pocket watch. Attached to it was simply a piece of shoestring, so I searched online for a proper pocket watch fob to complete it.

During my search, I came across a fob featuring a soldier in a doughboy helmet. Upon closer inspection, I discovered it was an authentic 1927 American Legion fob produced for the 9th National Convention at Fort Riley, Kansas.

I was glad to acquire it, and I am pleased to share a few photos of the watch alongside its new, historically fitting fob.

— Lee Lance



The Chaplain's Corner

POW/MIA Recognition Day



National POW/MIA Recognition Day is commemorated on the third Friday of every September, a date not tied to any single war. Official resolutions establishing the day were passed in 1979 by Congress and the President after families of more than 2,500 Vietnam War POW/MIAs pushed for full accountability.

The purpose of Recognition Day is to ensure America honors those who serve, stands behind their families, and leaves no stone unturned to account for those who never returned. According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), nearly 82,000 Americans remain missing:

- World War II: 73,515 (approximate due to limited historical records)
- Korean War: 7,841
- Vietnam War: 1,626
- Cold War: 126
- Conflicts since 1991: 6

Roughly 75 percent of missing service members are in the Asia-Pacific, with over 41,000 presumed lost at sea. Recovery operations remain active; for instance, in a single recent reporting cycle, the DPAA accounted for 41 men missing from the Korean War through field recoveries and forensic analysis of unknown remains.

The Missing Man Table

Also known as the Fallen Comrade Table, this display originated to honor service members who did not return from combat. Frequently set up in military dining facilities, official ceremonies, service balls, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day events, every element carries specific symbolism:

- Round Table: Represents everlasting concern and continuous remembrance.
- White Tablecloth: Symbolizes the purity of motives when answering the call to serve.
- Black Napkin: Represents the sorrow for those still missing.
- Single Red Rose: Honors the lives of the missing and the loved ones who keep faith.
- Red or Yellow Ribbon: Represents the determination to account for the missing.
- Slice of Lemon: Signifies the bitter fate of those missing or captured.
- Pinch of Salt: Symbolizes the tears shed by waiting families and friends.
- Lit Candle: Serves as a beacon of hope for their eventual return.
- Inverted Glass: Reminds us that they cannot partake in the meal or toast.
- Empty Chair: Visualizes the missing service member's absence.
- The Bible: Symbolizes the strength gained through faith to sustain us and those lost from our country, founded as one nation under God.

— Virgil Marko, Chaplain Post 159



EARL GRAHAM POST 159

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